



VDACS

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Office of Meat and Poultry Services, Phone: 804-786-4569; Fax: 894-786-1003 **FACT SHEET**

## Basic Facts about SSOP's and HACCP Plans for Meat and Poultry Processors

*All meat and poultry processors under Federal or State inspection are required by law to have Sanitation Standard Operation Procedures (SSOP's) and a Hazard Analysis & Critical Control Points (HACCP) plan or plans in place. These measures help ensure that the meat and poultry processors are producing safe products. These ideas can be confusing and difficult to understand so it is important to learn the basics before starting your meat or poultry processing business.*

### What is an SSOP?

Sanitation Standard Operating Procedures (SSOP's) are written descriptions of the procedures that a meat or poultry processor uses to prevent contamination or adulteration of their product. These include the actual procedures they perform to clean their equipment, utensils and facilities and other procedures they use to insure their product is not contaminated.

### What specific things does a SSOP need to contain?

All SSOP's must meet certain basic requirements. The written procedures must:

Contain all of the procedures the establishment will use daily to prevent product contamination before production begins (preoperational procedures) and address, at a minimum, the cleaning of food contact surfaces of facilities, equipment, and utensils.

Contain all of the procedures used daily to prevent product contamination while product is being produced (operational procedures)

Specify the frequency with which each procedure is to be performed and identify the employee or position responsible for insuring the procedures are performed correctly and at the correct frequency.

Be signed and dated by the individual with overall authority on-site or a higher-level official of the establishment. This signature means that the establishment will implement the SSOP's as written and will maintain the SSOP's to meet regulatory requirements.

### What is HACCP?

HACCP is a technical term that stands for Hazard Analysis & Critical Control Points. This is a system that processors use to put a business's food safety practices into action. The system focuses on preventing food safety problems and ensures the production of safe products. HACCP applies scientific-based and technical information to practical situations in the meat and poultry production process.

### What types of food safety hazards does HACCP prevent:

HACCP covers all types of potential food safety problems including biological, chemical, and physical hazards that may naturally occur in the food or may occur in the production process. A HACCP program works to control hazards that affect the safety of the product. The main goal is to produce safe products for consumers.

### How do I develop a HACCP plan?

There are seven principles used to create a HACCP plan. They include:

- (1) Identify which hazards are likely to occur in the process by examining each step in the production process for potential food safety problems
- (2) Identify which points in the process are critical for controlling specific hazards: Critical Control Points (CCPs)
- (3) Identify a measurable target value that can be used to determine that each CCP has been met: the critical limits
- (4) Develop procedures for monitoring the CCP's
- (5) Develop procedures for correcting a problem if a CCP is not met
- (6) Develop procedures for verifying that the monitoring of the CCPs is being conducted
- (7) Develop record-keeping and documentation procedures

### Who needs a HACCP plan and SSOP's?

Any meat or poultry processor under inspection through the USDA or State Inspection Program must have both a HACCP plan and SSOP's in place. The requirements for these plans are found in the Code of Federal Regulations: 9 CFR 416 and 417. It is important to understand these requirements before developing these plans and procedures for your business.

### For additional information on how to develop SSOP's and a HACCP plan, contact:

Virginia Department of Agriculture, Office of Meat & Poultry Services: 804-786-4569 or visit [www.vdacs.virginia.gov](http://www.vdacs.virginia.gov).

FSIS Strategic Initiatives Partnerships and Outreach Staff: 202-690-6520 or visit [www.fsis.usda.gov](http://www.fsis.usda.gov).

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